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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000194

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: FORM OVER FUNCTION: MALI'S FIGHT AGAINST
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

REF: A. BAMAKO 00112
[1](#)B. BAMAKO 00005

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(SBU) Summary: On March 18 the Embassy attended a meeting of Mali's National Directorate for the Advancement of Children and the Family to review results of Mali's cooperative agreement with neighboring Burkina Faso on the prevention of child trafficking. The National Directorate is charged with leading Malian efforts against child trafficking. Other attendees included officials from various Malian government Ministries, local NGO representatives, UNICEF, and UNDP. Billed as a review of Malian government statistics and achievements in advance of an upcoming March 23-24 bilateral summit with Burkina on child trafficking, the meeting was immediately bogged down by disagreements over the style and form of the Directorate's Power Point presentation for the Burkina summit. The meeting ended without a review of relevant data, forcing the Directorate to travel to Burkina with a painstakingly edited but perhaps not so well-informed presentation. While the March 18 meeting yielded no additional statistics, it provided a sobering insight into the Directorate's chronic lack of documentation regarding Malian anti-TIP efforts. End Summary.

A Meeting with Promise...Delivers Disappointment

2.(SBU) On March 18 the Embassy attended Mali's annual review of its cooperative agreement with Burkina Faso against child trafficking. The National Directorate and its Director, Dr. Alou Barry, report to the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children, and the Family (MPFEF) and serve as the Malian government's clearinghouse for TIP related issues. The annual review gathered most of the main actors involved anti-TIP activities in Mali, including UNICEF and UNESCO, local NGOs, and representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior Security, and Territorial Administration. The meeting was intended to provide stake holders with a chance to help the Directorate compile and review TIP statistics in advance of a March 23-24 bilateral summit with Burkina on child trafficking.

3.(SBU) Under Dr. Barry's direction, however, the meeting immediately bogged down over questions about the style and format of the Directorate's Power Point presentation. With no substantive discussion of statistics in sight, the Embassy left, more than an hour after the meeting began. Participants who remained until the end later reported that no data was discussed and that the Directorate intended to depart for Burkina with a carefully edited but poorly vetted Power Point presentation on child trafficking statistics for [1](#)2008.

Comment: Statistical (In)Significance

4.(SBU) Unable to compare its statistics with those accumulated by local and international organizations, an apparently unprepared National Directorate for the Promotion of Children departed for the Burkina summit armed with a suspect data sheet seemingly compiled only in response to a February 2009 request from the Embassy for child trafficking statistics. According to this spread sheet, 21 Malian children - all male - were repatriated to Mali in 2008. Another five Malian child trafficking victims were intercepted by Malian authorities and returned to their families during the year. Forty-one child trafficking victims, including 7 with Burkina nationality, were repatriated from Mali back to their respective countries.

5.(SBU) Unfortunately, much of the Directorate's data contradicts information acquired separately from local and international NGOs involved in caring for child trafficking victims in Mali. The spread sheet also claims that the three child traffickers arrested in western Mali in March 2008 remain under "house arrest" in Kita despite overwhelming evidence - which we have on several occasions relayed directly to Dr. Barry - that the traffickers left town after Malian judicial authorities in Kita released them pending trial (Ref. A). These apparent inconsistencies could have been corrected, or at least discussed, had Dr. Barry allowed those attending the March 18 meeting to focus on Mali's child trafficking data as opposed to the format of his Power Point presentation.

6.(C) The bizarre March 18 meeting, and the Directorate's decision to depart for Burkina with unvetted child

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trafficking statistics, encapsulated the challenges confronting those attempting to simply document Malian efforts to combat child trafficking. In December 2008 one of the main NGOs working to prevent child trafficking and care for trafficking victims in Mali sounded a note of concern about the organization of the Directorate and per diem demands from Malian government officials whose official duties seemingly include working with local NGOs to prevent trafficking (Ref. B). Many of this NGO's concerns focused on Dr. Barry, who is frequently unreachable and unresponsive. This description mirrored the Embassy's own findings. There are many capable, sincere, and dedicated officials within the Malian Ministries charged with preventing child trafficking and carrying for trafficking victims. Unfortunately, Dr. Barry does not appear to be one of them and the National Directorate will likely remain directionless as long as he remains at the helm.

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